

# MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADD, ELIMINATE JUDGESHIPS FOR SOME COURTS RELEASED BY STATE COURT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

LANSING, MI, September 22, 2003 – Some of Michigan’s courts can do with fewer judges and some need more, according to a recent report from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the administrative arm of the Michigan Supreme Court.

The report recommends adding one judgeship each for 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (Macomb County), 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (Kent County) and 55<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (Clare and Gladwin Counties). The report also states that a Wayne County Circuit Court judgeship that is scheduled to be eliminated in 2005 should be retained, and that a Wayne County Probate Court judgeship should be eliminated instead.

In addition, the 8<sup>th</sup> District Court (Kalamazoo) and 70<sup>th</sup> District Court (Saginaw) could each lose one judgeship and the 77<sup>th</sup> District Court (Mecosta and Osceola Counties) could gain a judgeship, if the SCAO recommendations are adopted by the Michigan Legislature.

Under the state Constitution, Michigan’s judicial branch is responsible for making recommendations to the Legislature regarding the number of judges needed by state courts. SCAO reviews trial courts’ needs for judges, and issues a report to the Legislature, every two years. The review is a “complicated and multi-faceted process,” the report notes.

The report’s recommendations “are based on a weighted statistical analysis of the caseload of trial courts, followed by an analysis of additional factors affecting the workload of trial courts, such as the types of cases processed, demographic trends, and the availability of other resources,” the report states. “Additional courts may be reviewed based on the request of the chief judge of a court, the existence of pending legislation regarding judgeships, or as a result of recommendations from prior workload studies.”

The analysis took into account the “varying degrees of judicial effort” required for different types of cases as well as the total number of cases for each court. The weighted caseload analysis “allows for a more precise means of estimating judicial workloads,” the report notes. “For example, a significant portion of district court caseload consists of traffic cases, making the total number of cases processed in district courts significantly

higher than either circuit or probate courts .... [C]ivil cases, or misdemeanor cases ... typically require more judicial time than traffic cases.”

The table below summarizes the SCAO report’s conclusions. Most of the courts were included in the study because SCAO’s initial analysis indicated that there were either too many judges or not enough judges in the circuit or district court. Other courts were included because SCAO’s 2001 report indicated that the courts needed to be revisited. Two courts, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court in Wayne County and the 90<sup>th</sup> District Court in Emmet and Charlevoix Counties, requested a secondary analysis.

### **2003 JUDICIAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COURTS INCLUDED IN THE SECONDARY ANALYSIS**

<b>Court</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
C03 and Wayne Probate	Retain one circuit judgeship scheduled to be eliminated in 2005, and eliminate one probate judgeship in 2007.
C06 and Oakland Probate	No change in judgeships.
C07 and Genesee Probate	No change in judgeships.
C16 and Macomb Probate	Add one circuit judgeship.
C17 and Kent Probate	Add one circuit judgeship.
C49, Probate District 18, and D77 Mecosta and Osceola Counties	Add one district judgeship.
C55 and Probate District 17 Clare and Gladwin Counties	Add one circuit judgeship.
D08 - Kalamazoo County	Eliminate one district judgeship.
D18 - City of Westland	No change in judgeships.
D22 - City of Inkster	No change in judgeships.
D52 - Oakland County	No change in judgeships.
D63 - Kent County	No change in judgeships.
D67 - Genesee County	No change in judgeships.
D68 - City of Flint	No change in judgeships.
D70 - Saginaw County	Eliminate one district judgeship.
D90 - Charlevoix and Emmet Counties	No change in judgeships.

The report, entitled “Judicial Resources Recommendations,” is available on the “One Court of Justice” website at

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/index.htm>

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